

Abstract 470

TITLE: Collaborative Prevention Evaluation in California: A Case Study

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ISSUE: The CDC has identified a critical need for scientifically sound evaluation of planning and prevention programs. Collaborations between scientific researchers and community-based prevention organizations would seem to be a logical response to this need. However, historically, such collaborations have proven problematic because of the distinct purposes of academic and public health organizations.

SETTING: Academic/non-profit research institutions and community HIV prevention organizations throughout California.

PROJECT: In response to the above need for and historical problems with collaborative research efforts, the California State Office of AIDS (OA) and the University of California's University-wide AIDS Research Program (UARP) entered into an interagency agreement to bring together research scientists and community-based AIDS service organizations (ASOs) in California to create and implement scientifically sound prevention evaluation research strategies. The project includes the collaborative development between OA and UARP of a comprehensive plan for evaluating process, outcomes, and impact of all HIV planning and prevention programs in California. Outcome evaluation is being implemented through a peer review, Request For Application (RFA) process calling for grant applications from research/ASO or local government partnerships to evaluate local and statewide prevention programs. Successful applicants form a consortium that is charged with assessing the overall HIV prevention strategy for the state.

RESULTS: A collaborative, comprehensive evaluation research plan has been completed by OA and UARP which includes process, outcome, and impact evaluation strategies for all of the state's planning and prevention efforts. The first prevention evaluation RFA has been developed and released. Thirty-one scientific researchers and community-based organizations have responded with proposals for 14 evaluation projects statewide; all projects represent strong collaborative efforts with a focus on the diversity of the state's affected populations. An evaluation has also been completed collaboratively by the OA and UARP for the state's 1998 community planning group, and a 5-year evaluation strategy has been developed for the incoming planning group.

LESSONS LEARNED: Collaborative relationships between university research programs and state health departments can be an effective way to develop researcher/community collaborations needed to systematically sound evaluations of local and statewide HIV planning and prevention efforts.

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